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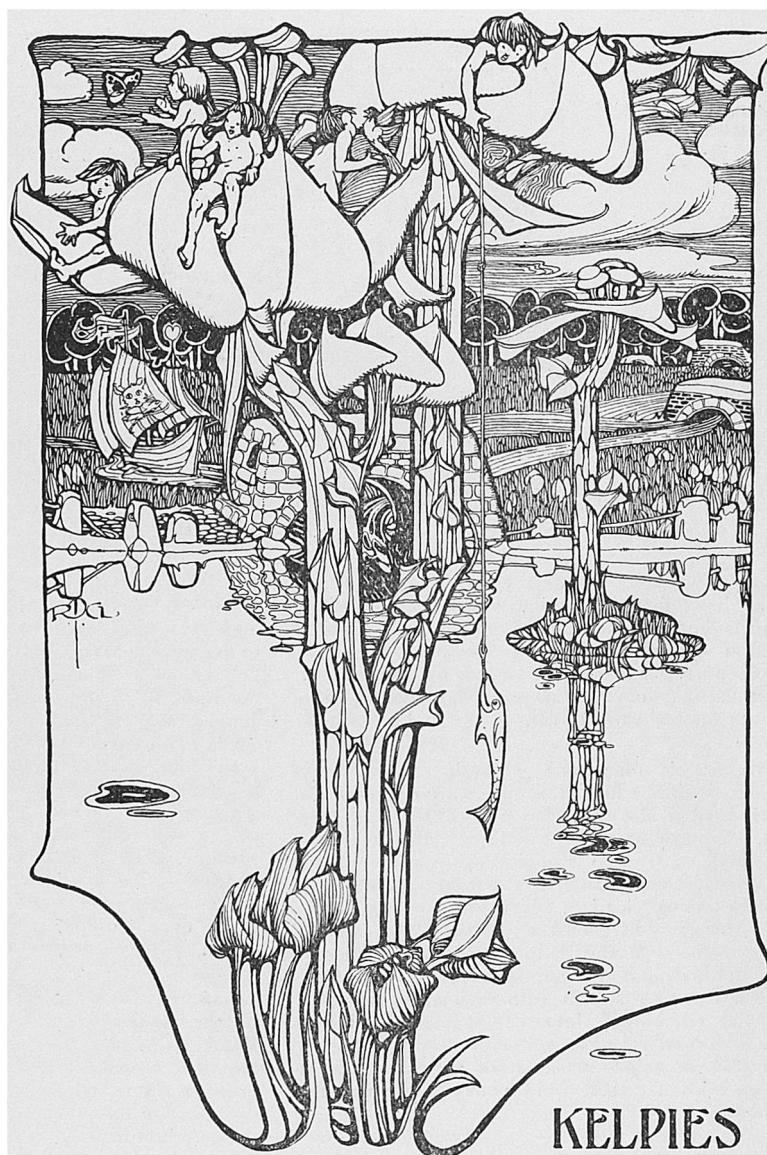
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REPOUSSÉ WORK

BLACK AND WHITE
PAGE ILLUSTRATION, BY
R. PERCY GOSSOP



could. Mr. Onslow Ford's monument for Manchester shown in the Academy, is anything but a success; Mr. Frampton's, now at Glasgow, has even less of dignity. Among the younger men, to whom could one turn? The young Scotch sculptor who modelled the statue of King Edward VII.—the first raised anywhere in his honour—standing under the dome of the Industrial Hall in the Glasgow Exhibition, does not rouse much confidence in untried genius. If the artists do not exist, it makes small difference whether or no there is a Minister of Fine Art or a Society for its encouragement, to make opportunities for them.

From a correspondent :—

'Rumours are rife, and one I have heard must be sadly interesting to the few designers who have during the last few years been doing their level best to improve a special relief material. There have been great difficulties and excessive limitations to contend with, but victory at last was assured. Now when success in style and workmanship is reached, rumour says the Wallpaper Manufacturers' Ltd. steps in and intimates that they have decided to supply the public with a material which yields

them greater profit. In other words the material in question is to be quietly removed from the scene because it yields a smaller profit than some other materials, and soon a "To be Let" announcement will adorn the windows of a shop in the west end of London, and with that sign will vanish the enthusiastic manager, and the dreams of his faithful designers. It is to be hoped that British competition is not going to be snuffed out altogether by the W. P. M. Ltd.'

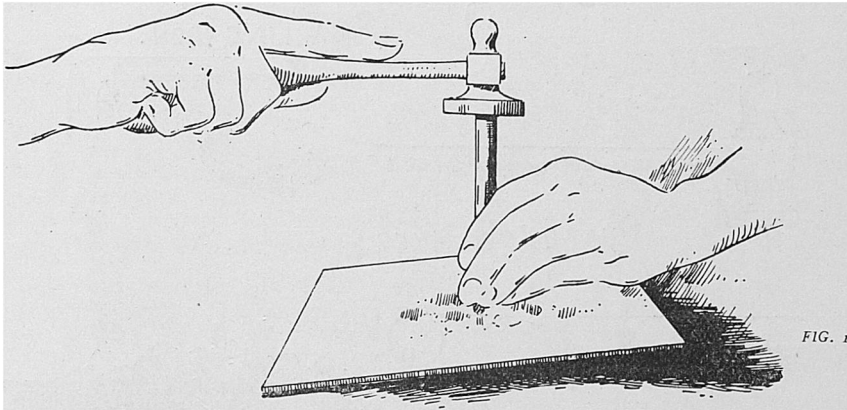
I. B.

HINTS ON REPOUSSÉ WORK AND CHASING BY G. A. FOURNIER

Silver Medallist (1st honours) City and Guilds of London Institution.

REPOUSSÉ work is a most ancient art, and was greatly practised as far back as the Roman and Byzantine periods, when, of course, it followed closely the distinctive lines of the goldsmith work of the time.

TOOLS FOR REPOUSSÉ WORK.



The process of working the metal has scarcely altered since and although Benvenuto Cellini, in connection with one or two Italian artists, claimed to have invented new methods, he was only following the principles laid down in his works by the Monk Theophilus. The art may well be said to belong to the thirteenth century.

The Renaissance saw its revival in Italy, and it was then perfected, many Italian artists having left 'Chefs d'Œuvres' even superior to those of Cellini.

In the seventeenth century, when the manufacture of arms and religious ornaments began to lose its importance, chasing became very useful in connection with domestic arts, as a few good works of the period still remain to prove.

The characteristic feature of repoussé, as indeed of its fellow trades, jewellery and enamelling, is its extreme

with an iron ring covered with rags; pitch-pan, caldron to heat the pitch, ladle and gas stove, snarling iron, shears, etc.

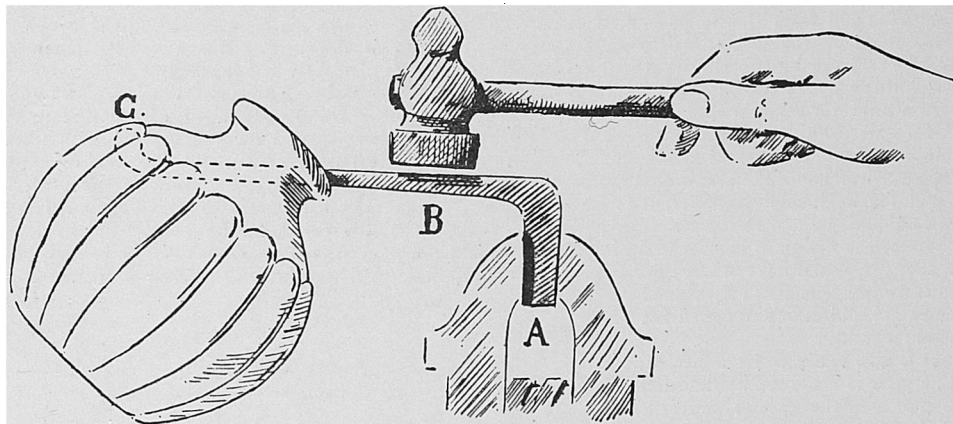
Chaser's pitch is better bought ready made, but is composed of one part of Swedish pitch, two of plaster of Paris and some tallow according to weather.

The workman will invariably make himself his tracers straight or curved, planishers and raising tools as well as surface tools (mats, freezers, French mats, hair tools, etc.)

Surface tools might advantageously be bought, but tracers should always be made at home.

They are all kept in small tin boxes so as to show their working ends, and be easily found.

A chaser will never hesitate to make a new tool when wanted, and will seldom alter one, so that he gets a good collection to choose from, but any tool



simplicity, as well as the small number of tools necessary to bring the work to perfection. In this, it is most adapted to amateurs as a pastime, but requires a knowledge of designing and an artistic taste of rather uncommon degree.

To ladies, it will give a splendid opportunity of displaying the natural taste which is always their share and will seldom require any great effort, while it is, I think, the ideal home beautifying art and its scope is almost unlimited.

The tools which must be purchased are very few, in fact, the only indispensable one being the chaser's hammer. Most of the others can be bought ready or home-made at will.

Apart from the small hammer, a chaser will use :— heavier hammer for raising up, mallet, chaser's bowl (a kind of iron heavy half ball), cushion, which can be made

that is only near the required shape is entirely wrong.

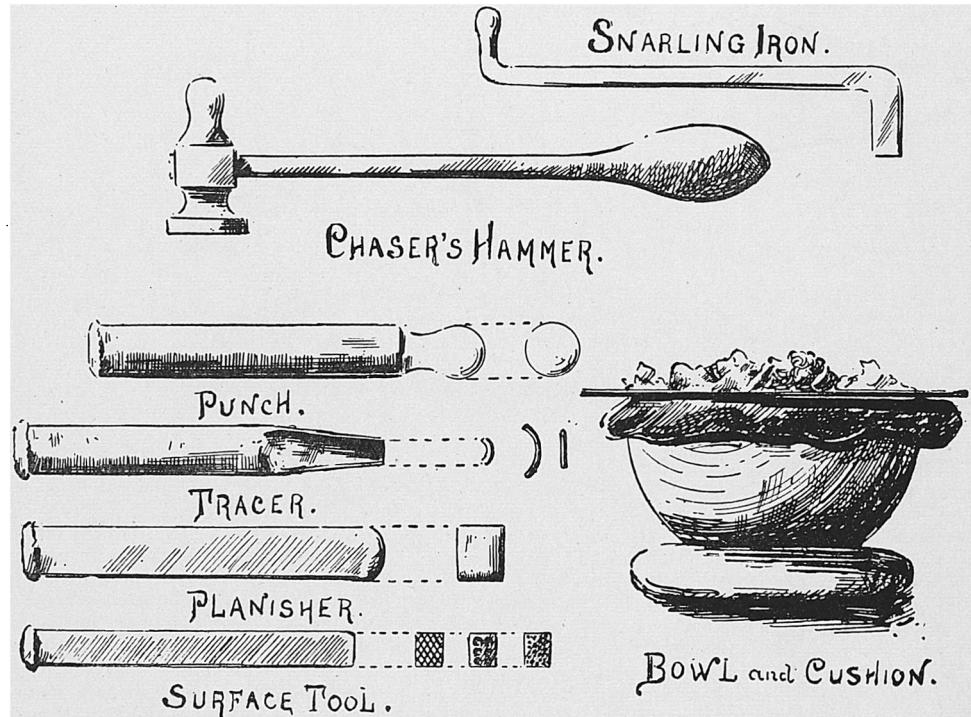
The finish of the work depends entirely on *suitable* tools being made and used for every different curve and every new ornament.

The tracers are about five inches long and cut from steel rods, softened by being made red-hot and left to cool slowly, forged and filed to size and shape, then hardened and tempered. This operation requires judgment, but is simple enough in itself. The tool is first made red-hot, then quickly dipped in cold water, when it is dead hard. It is then cleaned with sand paper, and by gentle heat brought to a fine straw colour; when dropped in water it is ready for use.

If the heat is kept on, the tool takes a blue tint and is rather too soft for chasing. The whole operation must be repeated.

METHOD OF REPOUSSÉ WORK

FIG. 3



This applies also to matting tools, punches, raising tools and planishers, although the three last-named may sometimes be used rather soft.

The pitch is kept warm in the caldron (or an old saucepan) and from this is poured as required into the bowl stood on the cushion. For an amateur the bowl may be replaced by anything that will answer the purpose and suit the size of work: heavy iron lid, stone slab and even a brick for smaller work.

To start work the first thing to be done is to choose a suitable piece of metal. Iron, brass, gilding metal, copper, silver and gold are sometimes used, but the only metal for beginners is copper, as it is soft, pliable, and will seldom split. The piece of plate should be fairly large for the design to be executed, about No. 10 thickness in the gauge, and have a very good surface. If not, this must be made smooth with sand paper and rubbed or hammered flat before chasing.

It is now ready to be annealed. The plate is made red hot and left to cool. In the case of copper it might be quenched when hot by being dropped in cold water, but brass should not be quenched or it will be harder than ever. On the whole, it is best to let all metals cool down slowly.

This operation of annealing is most important, and should be repeated every time the plate shows any sign of hardening, and even every time it is off the pitch.

The plate must be made warm and set on the cement when this is just warm enough to be modelled with the fingers, special attention being given to air bubbles, as their getting under the piece is absolutely fatal to the work.

The process is now simple, and requires more practice than theory. The design is first carried on to the plate by the ordinary means of carbon paper, etc., then traced with the tracers so as to show through to the reverse side.

The plate is reversed on the cement, and the raising up is done. For this a heavier hammer is used with the planisher, and the depth can be judged by some modelling wax being pressed into the recesses produced.

The plate is again turned face upwards, the edges of the pattern marked sharply with tracers and the background flattened and smoothed down with planishers.

The rest of the work is executed according to taste. The background may be coloured with a matting tool, this being turned round while used, so as to give a more even result. Leaves can be frosted, etc., and other parts left bright. With the explanation already given, a

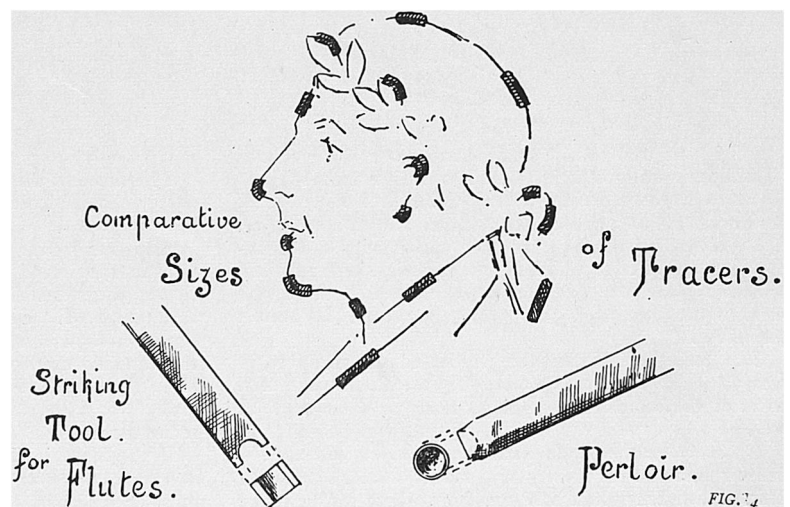


FIG. 4

CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTES

glance at any piece of repoussé work will tell the beginner how to proceed, and will do more than any written instructions.

In Figure 1 is shown the way to hold the tools, and Figure 2 will give a hint as to the way of using the snarling iron.

The snarling iron is used for raising body work when no planisher or raising tool could be used. Being held in the vice at A, and the piece of work firmly pressed against C, it will, when hit at B, vibrate and raise the work in a very short time. Its working end is left soft, and altered to any shape required.

These explanations ought to enable anyone with fairly good taste to start repousse and chasing work; the rest will be entirely a matter of observation, experiments and practice.

Figure 3 shows the tools used in chasing and the work on the pitch bowl, Figure 4 giving the approximate size of tracers compared to the curve required, as well as a perloir used to finish bead work, etc.

Anatomy,
Architecture,
Life,
Modelling Design,
Modelling Head from Life,
Principles of Ornament,
Painting of Ornament,
and Advanced Design.

If it is so, I think it monstrous!

The change in requirements, though so radical, is, I feel sure, what has been required for many years; but why disfigure a satisfactory change by such an absurd footnote?

Would it not elevate the standard of masters to amend it to something like this:—'All art masters under the age of, say, 35 years on 1st June, 1900, are required to complete the requirements for the present certificate before 1st January, 1907, or their certificates will only qualify them as assistants until such period as the present requirements are completed?'

Another subject might fittingly be added to the present certificates (at any rate, to the art teachers), and that is some qualification in the 'Art of Teaching.'

DIMRED.

ART SCHOOL

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of THE ARTIST.

SIR,—Can you or any of your readers explain the reason why the works of students of the Royal College of Art are this year not allowed to enter into the National competition, or to be exhibited in the annual exhibition, as has been the case hitherto?

The Royal College of Art is a state-aided institution, maintained by public money, and I believe the grants made to it are very generous in comparison with the grants made to provincial schools of Art, such as Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Leeds, etc. The works of these schools are examined by an independent body of examiners who are well-known experts in art. Who examines the work of the students of the Royal College of Art? Have such examiners any interest in the College? If so, can their examination be said to have that completely impartial character which is necessary for a fair assessment of the grant of public money? And why should not the works of the students be exhibited side by side with those of the provincial schools? Is it possible that they would show to disadvantage in comparison to provincial work? If so, the inference is that there is something wrong at the College of Art, which everybody would deplore. Perhaps somebody can give me information on these points.—Yours Obediently,
ART MASTER.

To the Editor of 'THE ARTIST.'

SIR,—You will no doubt have some interesting remarks on the changes in the A.C.T. and A master's certificate requirements; but, if not, I might ask if you do not think that an amendment of the footnote, 'Success obtained under the old rules will be accepted as far as possible in lieu of above,' might be made advantageously?

The remark is neither explicit nor satisfactory.

Does it mean that at the discretion of 'somebody' a student may get the certificate to qualify him for a head-mastership for merely getting a *first* in architecture and antique, and a *second* in principles of ornament? whereas another may be required to get *first* in—

NOTES.

THE City of Sheffield Corporation announce an important competition for a Memorial to be erected in Sheffield to Her late Majesty Queen Victoria. Full particulars will be found in the advertising pages of THE ARTIST.

AN ART BAZAAR.—The Royal Female School of Art, Queen's Square, London, W.C., has decided upon holding a bazaar for the sale of works of art, Christmas and New Year cards, and ornamental and useful articles, at the end of October, in aid of the funds for the building and renovating work required. The School is but poorly endowed, and any unusual expense that has to be incurred, as in the present case, has to be met by special means. It is hoped that all past and present students, and any of their friends who take an interest in the progress of Art, will contribute at least one article, and if there is a reasonable response to a call which should appeal with irresistible force to the many who have benefited from the teaching of the School, the exhibition will be a most interesting one, and the result to the funds of an admirable public institution all that could be desired. Any further information may be obtained from the Secretary (Miss Gann) at the School, as above.

THE town of Turin is making extensive preparations for next year's Universal Exhibition.

The public subscription has already reached the amount of 675,000 francs (£27,000) and Exhibitors from every country have already applied for space. Several foreign Nations will figure in special shows of their own.

In a few days will commence the erection of the buildings destined for the Exhibition, as planned by the happy conception of the architect, Mr. R. D'Aronco, and an experienced committee for public entertainments is working out a programme of public amusements full of attraction.

The Foreign Office has taken the necessary steps in order that the Government Representatives residing abroad should exert themselves in such a manner as to ensure large contributions from the most eminent foreign artists and from the leading art workers.